

The necessity for the immediate establishment of responsible Government in the State was urged on the attention of the Government by repeated representations in the previous sessions of the Assembly. At the 25th Session of the Assembly, the then Dewan Mr. Watts said that time was not yet ripe for the responsibility of the minister to be rendered to a representative body and not to the Ruler of the State. At the last session, the Dewan's reply was that our past experience had shown us that there was no need for us to be impatient and that it would only be wise and proper to leave it to our Rulers, who at the fit and proper time, gave the people the privileges they now enjoyed, to extend this privileges further at the proper time. It was doubtful whether at a time when India and all the world outside were undergoing a period of transition and when the cry for responsible Government had become universal, the people of Travancore would be satisfied with such a reply. The only satisfactory solution would be the early introduction of a system of Government under which the Head of the Administration would be responsible to the people of the country.

194. Responsible Government.

MR. NARAYANA PILLAI RAMAKRISHNA PILLAI (*Kottayam taluk, Group II*) said that the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly had lost all the characteristics of a representative institution and had become a meeting place of petition-mongers. Under such a state of affairs it was doubtful whether men of standing and status would care to come forward as members of the Assembly. The Government exhibited unpardonable indifference in carrying out the suggestions and representations made in the Assembly. The other representative institution, *viz.*, the Legislative Council, also shared the same fate. Many of the Bills passed by the Legislative Council during some years past had been totally lost sight of. The Government did not set any value to the opinions expressed by the representatives of the people. The representations made by them regarding the urgent needs of the people or about the grievances suffered by them on account of vagaries of Government officers were not cared for by the Government. With reference to the complaint of corruption in public service, at the 26th Session of the Assembly, the Dewan said that no Government would be justified in taking action against an officer, merely because there was a rumour or there was a vague statement by somebody that an officer was corrupt. This showed the mentality of the Government in the matter. The chosen representative of the people, one who commanded the respect and confidence of the whole constituency represented by him, was only a mere "some body" to the Government and no value was to be placed on his words.

Speaking of public service, the member said that corruption was rampant in most of the departments in the State. The Police and Judicial Departments excelled the other departments in this matter. The people suffered innumerable hardships on account of the avarice of the Police officers. They received bribes both from the complainant

and the accused. In law, both the receiver and the giver of illegal gratification were alike punishable. Hence nobody dared to come forward with a complaint against an officer who took bribes. The subordinates of the Judicial Department were also very corrupt. If any complaint was made against the corrupt subordinates, the head of the department would always try to shield them. The practice of transferring the subordinates of the Civil and Criminal Courts at short intervals was a wholesome one. But for a long time past this practice had been given up. The Government were also convinced of the existence of corruption in public service. With reference to putting down corruption, at the last Session of the Assembly, the Dewan observed as follows :—"What can be done must be done in co-operation—sympathetic co-operation between the people and the Heads of departments and the administration to find out where there is corruption, who are the corrupt officials and to deal with them in such a manner that they should be an example to others." But this was a solution which could never be achieved in view of the present attitude of the Government officials towards the people. The sympathetic co-operation between the Government officers and the people was a thing out of the question at the present day.

An examination of the working of the various departments would show the irresponsibility of the Government. As an instance, the member referred to the purchase of *lathies* by the Police Commissioner. With reference to the Excise policy, the Government had declared in the Administration Report that their aim was to promote temperance in the State. But the number of trees licensed for tapping during 1105, as well as the increased quantity of foreign liquor imported during the year showed a different mentality. The conduct of the Police at Shertallai in connection with the temperance movement, confirmed the fact that the Government preached one thing and practised another. This attitude of the Government was also seen in the policy adopted in regard to the Education Department. After making the study of Vernacular compulsory in all the schools and after insisting that instruction in all the subjects, except English, should be imparted in Vernacular language, the Government had appointed on a very high salary, a European Director of Public Instruction, who was quite a stranger to the language and local conditions of the country. It would appear that he had recommended the appointment of a Deputy Director also, which meant unnecessary excess expenditure. The Government had adopted a similar policy in regard to the appointment of Professors in the Women's College. Again the administration of the female branch of the Education Department, under the Inspectress of Schools was most unsatisfactory. The Government as well as the Government officers did not care for the wishes of the people. In British India, where the people were said to have not even nominal freedom, the Press enjoyed full freedom. But here the Press Regulation had stifled the Newspapers. Again the statements made in the representative institutions of British India were protected as privileged, while

the representatives in the State were made liable for prosecution for statements made in such bodies, in their representative capacity. This was a disgraceful state of affairs in a country like Travancore, which was a model State, with a civilized government.

The principle of communal representation accepted by the Government in the matter of recruitment to public service was not at all befitting a model State like Travancore. It destroyed the political consciousness of the people, so essential for the establishment of responsible Government, by encouraging communal discord in the scramble for offices. Similarly, the policy of giving undue encouragement and special concessions to men, who, though inefficient, were favourites of the authorities, was quite undesirable. Appointments and promotions should be made solely from considerations of efficiency.

In order to remedy the defects in the administration, which were the results of one man's rule, a Government that was responsible to the people should be established in the country.

195. Reform of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly and other administrative reforms.

MR. K. RAGHAVAN PILLAI (*Chirayinkil taluk, Group I*) said that the question of the reform of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly had been urged on the attention of the Government by repeated representations in the present as well as the previous sessions of the Assembly. For many years past, the Government had been stating that the question was engaging their serious attention, but without any result so far. These vain promises only tended to destroy the confidence of the people in the administration. This was also proof of the irresponsibility of the authorities towards the people. The institution was in the past a very useful one both to the Government and to the people. But ever since the reform of the Legislative Council in 1907, the Assembly had lost its position and status. But it was doubtful whether it would be necessary any further to trouble the Government with the question of the reform of the Assembly. When Travancore became a partner of the new All-India Federation, now under contemplation, it would be necessary to have here also, as in the case of other provinces, an Executive Council, responsible to the Legislature. Unless it was decided to have a bi-cameral system of legislature, a second chamber, under the reformed constitution, the Assembly would have no place in the Federal Constitution.

For the last one year, the whole of British India was carrying on intensive agitation for the attainment of self-government in the country and the Government were able to effect a peaceful settlement only on making a solemn promise to comply with the wishes of the people in the matter. This craving for self-rule was a common feature of all people who were subjected to the administration of an autocratic government. In all respects, Travancore had better claims for self-government than British India. In education, no other State or Province in British India was so far advanced as Travancore. According